



A view of the night market in central Luang Prabang.

--Photo Phonemaly

Luang Prabang sets sights on Asean clean city award

Times Reporters

Laos is gearing up to submit Luang Prabang province as a contender to receive the Asean Clean Tourist City Standard (ACTCS) in early 2018.

Deputy Director of the Tourism Development Department under the Information, Culture and Tourism Ministry, Ms Phonemaly Inthaphome, told *Vientiane Times* yesterday the world heritage town was

holding its third meeting to discuss an application.

The meeting took place from November 14 to 16, where officials decided on an action plan, the sectors that would be responsible, funding sources, and the time it would take to process the project.

"Luang Prabang has more potential than places in other provinces to receive the award. During our last meeting we collected information that would support Luang Prabang's application. There are 108 criteria that need to be met," Ms Phonemaly said.

The first meeting, which took place in May, explained the potential of the province to win the award to local

authorities and the private sector. This was done so they could help with the preparation of the application. The team visited landfill sites, water supply systems, handicraft and other commercial centres in the province to assess the town's suitability.

"Next year, we want to improve our chances of meeting the criteria before the final assessment in September, before we submit our application to Asean. If we receive the award, there will be a presentation ceremony in Thailand during the Asean Tourism Forum in early 2018," she said.

The third meeting of the

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Inspection of state leaders, departments centres on legal amendments

Souksakhone Vaenkeo

State leaders, heads of government, top legislators and other high-ranking officials will undergo inspection following the approval of the amended Inspection Law of the National Assembly (NA) and Provincial Assemblies.

Members of the NA concluded a majority vote by 78 percent of those attending the ordinary session on Tuesday, passing the draft-amended law.

The newly-added Article 15 of the draft-amended law stipulates that the country's president, vice president, prime minister, deputy prime ministers and cabinet members, who are elected or whose appointment is approved by

the NA, shall be required to undergo inspection by the NA through its ordinary session.

The supreme prosecutor, president of the People's Supreme Court, president of the State Auditing Organisation, and president of the NA, vice presidents of the NA, NA committees, NA committee chairpersons and vice chairpersons as well as the NA Secretary will also be inspected by the parliament.

Chairman of the NA Law Committee, Mr Saithong Keoduangdy told the ordinary session that it was necessary to amend the 2004-version law to meet the changing circumstances, aiming to ensure that the leaders and

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Swiss-Lao project promotes newborn care



Dr Marion Monkhoff (left) shakes hands with Dr Sivaney Chanthavongsouk at the handover of medical equipment this week.

Times Reporters

The Swiss-Lao Hospital Project has provided medical equipment worth about US\$1 million for Lao hospitals, aiming to improve

conditions for new mothers and newborns around the country.

Deputy Director General of the Mother and Newborn Hospital, Dr Sivaney

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Govt, development partners push for technology, innovation development



Mr Houthphanh Intharath says the Party and government have attached great importance to the development of science and technology.

Times Reporters

The government and its development partners have stepped up joint efforts to push for the development of science, technology and innovation in Laos in a move to drive national development.

Representatives from the relevant ministries and UNESCO met yesterday in Vientiane to raise awareness on UNESCO's Global Observatory on Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Instrument.

In his opening remarks, Deputy Minister of Science and Technology, Mr Houthphanh Intharath spoke highly of the policy that supports science, technology and innovation development in various countries.

The deputy minister touched

on the move in which Laos has been selected as the first country in the region to implement a pilot project under the policy to support the development of science, technology and innovation in the country.

During the two-day training workshop, participants shared lessons learnt concerning science, engineering, technology and innovation policies as well as instruments, research and development indicators on science, engineering, technology and innovation including those being implemented in Laos.

The move aims to contribute to the effort of defining policy, strategy and both the shorter and longer term development plans of the sector in order to contribute to the ambition to attain the sustainable development goals for 2030.

Mr Houthphanh informed the meeting that the Lao Ministry of Science and Technology has just concluded its 2nd Nationwide Meeting and the first Science Meeting last month, which adopted the draft strategy on science and technology development until 2025 and vision until 2030.

The five-year science and technology development plan 2016-2020 was also approved at the meeting.

"The plan has set both shorter and longer term targets in order to enable the science, technology and innovation sector to become an instrument to drive and realise the 8th national socio-economic development plan," he told the meeting.

The Party and government of Laos has attached great importance to the development of science and technology, reflected by the fact that the development needs of the sector have been incorporated in the constitution, laws and resolutions of the Party Congress, the deputy minister said.

Given that a lot more work needs to be done to develop science and technology in Laos, Mr Houthphanh said the workshop would provide an opportunity for Lao policy developers to learn and share best practices with international experts so that the lessons could contribute to the development of the relevant policies in Laos.



(From left) Mr Frank Kuenzi, Mr Phoukhong Sisoulath and Ms Kelisiana Thynne co-chair the meeting.

Laos, partners promote int'l humanitarian law

Times Reporters

Laos will partner with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the international community at large to raise awareness and understanding of the International Humanitarian Law, as part of the State Parties' obligations.

This was the key statement delivered yesterday by the Director General of the Department of Treaties and Law at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr Phoukhong Sisoulath, when addressing a seminar on related issues.

In his opening remarks, Mr Phoukhong said he appreciated the efforts of the ICRC to make the International Humanitarian Law known worldwide, and its important role in limiting the impact of wars and armed conflicts that have occurred in many parts of the world.

As Laos has been affected by war and armed conflict in the past, its people are cognisant of the impact of war and the adverse consequences of war remnants in the form of UXO.

"The country now enjoys

lasting peace which is the highest aspiration of the Lao people," Mr Phoukhong said.

The importance of the International Humanitarian Law and the treaties and conventions that form its core were the main points of the seminar organised by the department and the ICRC yesterday.

"The ICRC and the Lao Red Cross have worked together since 1999 to promote and disseminate the International Humanitarian Law in Laos. Many sessions and workshops on the law and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement have been held in Vientiane and at the provincial level," the Head of the ICRC office in Laos, Mr Frank Kuenzi, said.

Mr Kuenzi said the ICRC's mission includes the promotion and dissemination of the law, adding "The International Humanitarian Law, and the respect of its principles and provisions by all parties to a conflict, are of utmost importance since we witness in many parts of the world an escalation of protracted situations of conflict and a multiplication of actors involved in those conflicts."

"Ensuring the knowledge and the respect of the provisions of the law is an obligation. It is in times of peace that preparations for a deterioration of the situation, leading potentially to conflicts, should be made," Mr Kuenzi said.

"This is the fourth event organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where we have the opportunity to share knowledge and views on how the law remains relevant even during peacetime," he added.

Fifty representatives from related line ministries and organisations attended and heard about the main humanitarian-related treaties, in particular the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, as well as Laos' adherence to those treaties.

The seminar was part of the joint effort by the Lao government and the ICRC to raise awareness and understanding of the International Humanitarian Law in Laos.

The seminar was co-chaired by Mr Kuenzi, Mr Phoukhong and the ICRC Regional Legal Adviser, Ms Kelisiana Thynne.

Over 40 crimes reported during That Luang festival

Times Reporters

A total of 46 crimes were reported to the Vientiane Public Security Headquarters during this year's That Luang Festival.

The incidents took place from November 8-14, with pickpocketing being the most common crime and 31 cases reported. In addition, five bags were reportedly slashed, one fight broke out, there was one drug-related case, and five robberies and three general thefts were noted.

Losses included more than 47 million kip in cash, over 56,000 Thai baht, 14 baht weight of gold, US\$6,200, 700 yuan, 18 mobile phones, one camera, and other items. The police arrested eight people including

two women.

During last year's That Luang festival there 21 crimes, with pickpocketing again the most commonly reported offence. More than 15 million kip and other items were stolen and the police arrested two men.

No crimes were reported at Lao-ITECC, where the commercial part of the festival took place.

This year, 2,481 police, soldiers and students were stationed around the festival to ward off criminals and prevent antisocial behaviour.

The Vientiane Public Security Headquarters also reported other crimes that occurred around the capital during the festival period.

Some 43 crimes were

reported in Vientiane with police solving 29 cases and arresting 77 people including 19 women.

Most of the incidents were drug-related, with 13 cases reported. Police solved 13 cases and arrested 35 people, including five women.

There were also 11 general thefts, with police solving six cases and arresting nine people. Police also seized 298 amphetamine pills and a gun.

The Vientiane Traffic Police reported that from November 8-14, a total of 31 traffic accidents took place in the capital, resulting in four fatalities.

Compared to last year the number of accidents dropped from 19 to 31, but the number of fatalities remained the same.

Switzerland donates equipment... FROM PAGE 1

Chanthavongsouk, said this week the equipment would help to improve the quality of medical services for mothers and children.

"Switzerland's assistance supports the Ministry of Health's policy to reduce the number of deaths among mothers and babies throughout the country," he added.

According to the 2012 Lao Social Indicator Survey, the death rate of birthing mothers is 357 out of every 100,000 births. The death rate of children under one year is 68 out of every 1,000 live births, and for children under five it is 79 out of every 1,000 live births.

The equipment donated by

Switzerland includes incubators, phototherapy lamps, ultrasound machines, warming beds, gynaecology chairs and other items related to mother and child healthcare.

It will be distributed to Xayaboury, Luang Namtha, Xieng Khuang and Champassak provinces and the main hospitals in Vientiane. Most of the equipment will be installed at district hospitals. Vice President of the Swiss-Lao Hospital Project, Dr Marion Monkhoff, said the project will continue to improve mother and child health in Laos in the long term.

"In the future we plan to provide training on how to provide better service in

hospitals," she said.

Dr Monkhoff observed that the care of newborns and their mothers is better today than in the past but said many aspects still needed improvement. The Swiss-Lao Hospital Project would continue to provide solutions to various problems, she added.

The Swiss-Lao Hospital Project is an initiative run by Swiss doctors, midwives, nurses and association members who have lobbied for an improvement in the medical care available to mothers and children in Laos since 2000.

President of the project, Dr Urs Lauper, was also present at the equipment handover.

Lao Press in Foreign Languages

Vientiane Times

Established 1994

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